

REINCARNATION

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WIPING OUT TO WRITE AGAIN

The reverend doctor came to me, his face beaming, and his finger on the opening sentence of a book. And the sentence, taken from Bossuet, was this: "When God wipes out, He is getting ready to write."

"That gives us something to ponder over," said the doctor. Then he rushed away, for he is a very busy man. Suppose we ponder a little.

Some of God's writing is indelible, but much is written on a slate. The school-boy, even, who desires to write anew on his slate, must first wipe out the previous writing. It is practically impossible to superimpose one writing upon another. To do so would be to produce a confused script, not illuminating, but illegible, not informing, but without meaning.

God, Nature, call It what you will, is the great Builder. In an equal ratio It is also the Great Destroyer. The content of energy in this earth of ours is an unvarying quantity. One thing

may be transmuted and become another but the net amount of energy available for evolution and progress, for evil or for good, remains the same. Progress is obtained in one way, and in one way only, and that is by transmuting that which is hurtful into that which is helpful, by turning forms which are injurious, ineffective, or worn out, into vehicles which are beneficent and efficient for the purposes of good. Old forms must be destroyed when they have outlived their usefulness, or have become a menace. It is well, in order to maintain a proper perspective, to remember that the finger of Nature writes often with infinite slowness in the work of evolution; but the sword of the Supreme Thinker and Doer often reaps with marvellous suddenness some evil harvest which has been for a long time ripening in the half-evolved souls of humanity. Such a harvest is the Great War. The Kingdom of Heaven is in the human soul; but so also is the Kingdom of Darkness; and nations must reap the dark karma which they sow, as well as individuals. If the evil harvests were not periodically garnered and cast into the fire, there could be no preparation of the soil for a new and better fruition. Nature, in her stately march towards ultimate perfection, does automatically what man often does consciously. An example comes to mind.

There is a wild, weedy, unproductive waste adjacent to a city. The men of the city consult and consider, and determine to turn this evil waste into a beautiful park where the people may find rest and enjoyment. Rough inaccessible places are leveled and become pleasant paths,

bordered by beautiful shrubs and flowers; seats are provided for the weary and the contemplative; patches of weeds and thorns become smiling lawns upon which little children play and gain health and happiness; the pestilential marsh becomes a lovely lake. But to produce this beneficent result man makes of himself a callous and thoughtless destroyer. Myriad forms of sentient life, millions of industrious ants, of grub and chrysalis, on their way to become beautiful winged creatures, and innumerable other forms of life are destroyed without thought or consideration. The ultimate good is the one object. The passing carnival of destruction of the inferior forms of life is unheeded. It is incidental. Man is wholly indifferent to it.

Nature, on an even larger scale, habitually destroys in the same manner. Evolution—the ultimate good—is its object. Passing disturbances and uprootings of existing orders are negligible features in the working out of the great plan laid out in the thought of the Supreme One before the foundation of the world.

Forms continually change, but the Life which manifests through those forms is always inherently the same, for it is the One Life of which all individual forms, from the least unto the greatest, are but cells.

Another illustration is from the story of man's material progress. There is an evil slum in a great city. Conditions are noisome, but at the same time, this slum is the home, and the only home, of a great many human beings. The site of the slum is required for great warehouses, great sky-scrappers, great stores, in order that

the great city may expand, may grow, may march on in progress. Before this can be done the slum must be destroyed, must be wiped out, even though the poor are ruthlessly cast out to find homes existing most likely under even more evil conditions. Man is only doing what Nature (*mutatis mutandis*) is doing. That which is evil and noisome is turned into that which is stately and sanitary, useful and progressive, and the men in power heed not the suffering which is the price of change. Man also wipes out before he begins to write.

Again, when the volcano belches forth its flood of burning and destructive lava, It is only wiping out, so that in a thousand years to come it may write a story of fruitful vineyards, smiling gardens and corn-fields, and happy villages.

The Great Destroyer and the Great Builder are One and the Same Being. And though there is an apparent ruthlessness in His methods His purposes are ever kind, for He doeth all things well.

John Hawkes.

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There are fixed moral laws, just as there are uniform physical laws. These moral laws may be violated by man, endowed as he is with individuality and the freedom which that involves. Each such violation becomes a moral force in the direction opposite to that towards which evolution is drifting, and inheres in the moral plane. And by the law of reaction each has a tendency to evoke the operation of the right law. Now, when these opposing forces accumulate and acquire a gigantic form, the reactionary force necessarily becomes violent and results in moral and spiritual revolutions, pious wars, religious crusades, and the like.

From "The Doctrine of the Heart."

THOREAU'S VIEW OF LIFE

The writings of Thoreau, the American poet-naturalist and philosopher, contain much of deep interest to students of the higher life. His views on immortality, while not always clearly propounded, are tinged with the idea of reincarnation, and he once expressed to his friend Channing his belief that he must pass through all forms of life and "come full circle."

The Law of Karma is very clearly stated. For example, he says: "Probably, if we were wise enough, we should see to what virtue we are indebted for any happier moment we enjoy. No doubt we have earned it at some time; for the gifts of heaven are never quite gratuitous. The constant abrasion and decay of our lives makes the soil of our future growth. The wood which we now mature, when it becomes virgin mould, determines the character of our second growth, whether that be oaks or pines."

The keynote of Thoreau's life was simplicity. He tried to solve the problem of life by doing as the mathematicians do,—reducing the equation to its simplest terms. Speaking of natural beauty, Channing said, "There is Thoreau, he knows about it. Give him sunshine and a handful of nuts and he has enough." Perhaps there are not many who can be content with "sunshine and a handful of nuts," but we can at least rid ourselves of many of the complexities of existence and get down to fundamentals. Modern society has much to learn from the philosophy of Henry David Thoreau.

J. W. S. Logie.

THE AEONIAN CHARACTER OF LIFE

It is quite true that no really satisfactory view of human life is possible without an understanding of the principle of reincarnation as the mode of evolution as it applies to the human race. Reincarnation gives the only consistent explanation of why there are such vast differences between human beings: these are almost wholly a matter of the age of the individualised human souls, the egos, and the widely different experiences passed through by them in their successive lives on earth. The words 'almost wholly' were used because there is a third factor which must be considered, and that is the original differences of the so-called ray qualities in the connections between egos and their divine sources, the monads. These fundamental differences alone would result in different types of human beings; in fact there are seven of such distinct types, with the possibility of endless combinations in different proportions. But these types or ray qualities show out principally in the ego and not so much in the personality, in which only a part of the ego can find its expression.

Reincarnation means a succession or series of human lives for every ego, and at the present time this series is still far from being completed for the average man. And the actual stage of evolution varies very much for different egos. Some have had many earth-lives, with a rich store of experiences; others have had but a small number of earthly incarnations, with necessarily only a small accumulation of experience. The human ego has his period of youth; he grows

very slowly but very surely, as his earth-lives multiply, and he finally reaches a certain perfection, depending on his particular type. It is then that his human evolution is completed. He has then no more to learn by means of lives in the bodies of the personality. All along this human evolution there are different degrees of attainment, and the whole mass of human egos differ widely in their ages as egos, just as the members of a large household differ in their ages and their developments as personalities.

The ego is only relatively permanent: that is, his life is permanent as compared with the life of the personality. The personality must regard the ego as an immortal being whose life has a duration which is practically without an end. But the ego had a beginning, and he must have an ending. He was constructed as a compound of different elements, and these combinations must finally be dissolved and separated. And then the ego will come to his ending, or death.

This shows us that the ego is not life itself but only a means through which life can express itself. While the ego is not truly immortal, the life of the ego is divine and immortal. This life is called the Self. The ancient Indian books and scriptures called it Atma; our own philosopher Emerson termed it the Over-Soul; while Jesus called it his Father in Heaven.

The Self is beginningless, and it is therefore endless. In fact, the Self is independent of time and space. The Self is the Unity which is the Life of the universe, and which gives the means of interrelating and connecting all things and all living beings into one universe which is subject

to Law and Order. The Self is One, but in our world of separateness there are many connecting links with the Self, and that part of the Self which is closely related to the ego is called the Monad.

As the name indicates, the Monad is not a compound being but a unity. It is a unit of life, a permanent and individualised center of consciousness in the All-Consciousness of the Over-Soul. Not being of compound nature, the Monad is not subject to dissolution. In the Monad is thus found our true immortality.

Life, as we know it in our everyday worlds of actions, of feelings and of thoughts, is constantly changing. This shows us that life is not, in itself, a reality but only an expression of a reality. We may infer that there is reality in life, because of the Law and Order which are always recognisable throughout life. Now, the reality which we infer and feel and know, without ever seeing it or having an ordinary proof of its existence, is the Self, and for each individual man it is the Monad which is his rooting in the Self, his connection with the Self. There is a different Monad for every human being.

We know that the life of the personality is transitory, and of brief duration. When we begin to feel and know the life of the ego, we are likely to fall into the error of regarding it as our true self and as an immortal being. But careful analysis of the nature of the ego, and also the authoritative statements of those who have developed and even transcended the self-consciousness of the ego, tell us that the ego is a complex being in a continuous process of slow change and

growth. This means that the ego also has a life-span, a duration, although of a vastly greater magnitude and measure than the life of the personality. Compared with the personal life, its duration is of enormous length, practically not to be measured in terms of years.

It is very important for students of reincarnation to grasp as much as possible of the truth of this æonian character of our egoic life and growth. Although it is so long and it so much transcends our ordinary life, it is well to learn that it is only a larger life of change than the one of the personality: it also has its ending and its renewing. The ego has his successive lives or reincarnations, just as has the personality. Just as the ego remains permanent for a long series of personalities, so the succession of egos have their permanent rooting in the Monad.

The reason why it is so very important to understand something of the life-cycle of our larger selves, the egos, is that this knowledge will help us to free ourselves from the limitations of the personality and even to some extent from those which belong to the egoic life, free though it may be. The violent changes which occur in the life of the personality can not be understood without a knowledge of the law of karma; the meaning of the personal lives must be learned by seeing them in their relation to the egoic life, as successive incarnations of the ego. But the egoic life is itself only one of a series of expressions or incarnations of the monadic life, which is the reality which gives rise to the belief in man's immortality. "Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" applies to

the knowledge of the cyclic nature of life and the relation of the shorter and smaller cycles to those which are larger and of immense duration.

Mere knowledge alone would not be of great value to us, but when our lives are consciously ordered and guided in those ways which will most freely allow the expressing of our highest natures,—it is then that we are living most truly and are preparing ourselves for leaving a smaller, shorter and limited cycle of life for one that is larger, longer and freer.

We know by experience that, although we must suffer a loss of consciousness when we fall asleep at night, we regain our ordinary waking consciousness on re-awaking in the morning, and our personality remains continuous throughout the period of our earth life, in spite of the many breaks and blanks in its history. Similarly, we know, by another and a higher experience, however, that there is a higher part of our being, the ego, whose consciousness remains continuous and unbroken throughout many lives and deaths on earth, and the periods of life in the astral and mental worlds, the so-called "heaven-life."

Our inmost Self, the Monad, must therefore, if we reason by analogy or accept the statements of the most advanced students, also retain a continuous and unbroken consciousness through periods of time which are to us inconceivably vast. It is in the Monad that the results of our egoic evolution are treasured up, just as it is in the ego that the results of our ordinary human evolution as personalities are permanently stored.

C. S.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

“It hath not beginning nor end,” he said;
And he said it sorrowfully;
“It hath no shore, nor sky, nor bed;
With the tears of the world alone is it fed,
And it never reacheth the sea.”

“The River of Life is sad,” he said;
“It murmureth mournfully;
It creepeth along, with a moan that is dread;
It singeth no song, and it beareth no bread;
And it never reacheth the sea.”

“The River of Life is dark,” he said;
“It floweth despairingly
Through regions of gloom wrought of hopes that are fled,
And its waters are cold as the feet of the dead,
And it never reacheth the sea.”

“Oh! Ancient Man, with the peaceful mien,
I pray you tell to me,
What means this river that hath no source,
Which ever runneth its fruitless course,
And never reacheth the sea?

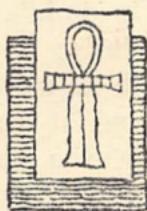
“What means this river that sings no song,
That floweth endlessly,
And bears me, a helpless leaf, along
Through a senseless medley of right and wrong,
And never reacheth the sea?”

“It hath a beginning,” the Old Man said;
“In the hills of eternity;
The Wonderful God is its fountain head,
Its source and its shore, its sky and its bed,
And He is the waiting sea.

“The River of Life is the River of God;
Earth’s river and His are one;
In Him abide, and the troubrous tide,
With His hand to keep, and His light to guide,
Shall bear thee safe, my son.

"The doubt and the dark are but for a night;
The darkness and drear shall flee;
And the River of Life shall sing with power;
It shall shout with joy in the mighty hour,
When it reaches the shining sea."

John Hawkes.



AUSTRALIAN REINCARNATION BELIEFS

Among the Central Australian tribes the belief is firmly rooted that the human soul undergoes an endless series of reincarnations, that the living men and women of one generation are nothing but the spirits of their ancestors come to life again and destined to be themselves re-born in theis descendants. During the intervals between incarnations the souls live in their "nauja" spots or local totem centres which are always natural objects such as trees or rocks. Each totem clan has a number of such totem centres scattered over the country. There the souls of the dead men and women of the totem, but of no other, congregate during their disembodied state and thence issue and are born again in human form when a favorable opportunity presents itself. . . The common Australian practice of depositing the dead in trees may, in some cases at least, have been designed to facilitate rebirth; for trees are often the places in

which souls of the dead reside, and from which they come forth to be born again in human shape. Thus the Unmatjera and Kaitish tribes bury very aged women and decrepit old men in the ground, but the bodies of children, young women, and men in the prime of life are laid on platforms among the boughs of trees, and in regard to children we are definitely told that this is done in the hope that "before very long its spirit may come back again and enter the body of a woman —in all probability its former mother." Further, the Arunta, who bury their dead, are careful to leave a low depression on the side of the mound, in order that the spirits may pass out and in; and this depression always faces towards the dead man's or woman's camping ground in the Alcheringa or remote past, that is, the spot which he or she inhabited in spirit form. Is not this done to let the spirit rid itself of its decaying tabernacle and repair to the place where in due time it will find a new and better body? . . . In Mount Elgon in E. Africa when it is desired to perpetuate on earth the life of some old man or woman or young baby, the corpse is buried inside the house or just under the eaves, until another child is born to the nearest relation of the corps. This child takes the name of the corpse, and the Bagishu firmly believe that the spirit of the dead has passed into this new child and lives again on earth. Similarly among the tribes of the lower Congo, a baby is always buried near the house of its mother, never in the bush. It is believed that the only new thing about the child is its body.

From Frazer's "Golden Bough," Vol. I.

REINCARNATION IN CHRISTIANITY

We shall consider one of the doctrines which had general vogue in the early Christian Church and which, after lying semi-dormant for a considerable period, appears again to be coming vigorously to the fore. If we turn to the last page of the Old Testament, we find the prophet Malachi foretelling the coming of the Messiah. In the fourth chapter of his prophecy we find this verse: "Behold I send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." This is the reason the Jews of the time of Christ were looking forward to the reappearance on the earth of the prophet Elijah. It might perhaps be well for us to study into the beliefs and point of view of the Jews at that time. Were they looking for the coming of Elijah in the same miraculous way as he was reported to have been taken up, or were they looking for him to come in the regular course of human events? As we look into it we find that it was in the latter way, apparently, that the Jews were looking for Elijah to come.

It appears that the Jews at the time of Christ had currently this belief: that this world was a school in which God places His children for their training, and so long as there were any lessons still to be learned in this material school of experience men could expect to return to gain these lessons. This doctrine of the Jews at that time has been called "reincarnation," this Latin word meaning 'coming again into the flesh'; and also the Greek word "metempsychosis," or *re-insoulment*, is often used.

There are many different indications to bear witness that this idea was currently believed. For example, the Jewish historian Josephus tells of an experience he had when he was engaged with other Jews in the defence against the Romans of the town of Iosatopa. He says that the Romans overcame them and he, with some forty of his comrades, was driven into a cave. There one of the other soldiers suggested that they commit suicide to prevent their falling into the hands of the Romans. Josephus recounts how he himself argued against such a course, calling the attention of his friends to the adverse effect of such a course on their next coming into the life on the earth.

We can also get another light on the way in which the Jews considered this matter when they asked if John the Baptist was not Elijah; and in the case of the man born blind we recall that the Jews asked Christ, "Master, did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Now, it is evident that the man could not thus have sinned in this life, being born blind; therefore their question as to whether it was a sin of his implies that it must have been a sin previous to his appearance on this earth.

By these and other evidences which could be brought forward, we can see what the current opinion of the Jews of that time was. If we turn from that to the teaching of the Pharisees and the Rabbis, the leaders of the Jews, what do we find? We find the same teaching. There are outside historians who speak of the Pharisees teaching the doctrine of reincarnation. This teaching must not for a moment be confused

with the doctrine of transmigration of souls, by which doctrine souls are supposed to return to the earth in the form of animals in some future state, and which belief has been attributed to many semi-civilised nations. There were inner, as well as outer, beliefs, and secret traditions were known among the priests. For instance, if we turn to the Kabbala, which, although it was not set down in writing until after the time of the Christ, is reported to have a very early origin, we find this same teaching set forth. According to the Kabbala and other similar evidences, there were indications of a secret teaching of the inner priesthood, which went far back to the time of Moses in the land of Egypt, and which had come down consistently to the time of the New Testament. The Kabbala clearly teaches this doctrine of reincarnation.

We can perhaps also find some light on this subject in the apocryphal *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*. Those who selected the books which form our Bible did so, not alleging that the books which they threw out were forgeries in any way, but simply alleging that they were not inspired by God. As an evidence if the time in which it was written this *Book of the Wisdom of Solomon* is of no less value. This book contains the following verse: "I was a witty child and had a good spirit, yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled."

There was another Jewish school in the early times of the Christian Church and somewhat before the time of Christ, which had a marked influence in the community, and is said to have had a marked and close relation with the early

Christian Church. This was the sect of the Essenes. They also taught this same doctrine of reincarnation.

Thus we see that both the priesthood and the common people were not looking for any supernatural return from the sky when they looked for the return of Elijah, but rather that they expected a very natural coming back to earth in human form,—a rebirth.

With this in mind, let us again look at the teachings of the Master. We find Him saying to the multitude (Matt. 11: 11-14), "Among men that were born of women there is not a greater than John the Baptist," and a few verses later, "If ye will receive it this is Elijah which was for to come." At that time John the Baptist was still in prison, but there was the very definite statement of the Master. A little later, in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew, after John had been beheaded, we find Christ bearing witness to him in this fashion, "But I say unto you that Elijah is already come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they will; and His disciples knew that He spoke unto them of John the Baptist." When Christ healed the man beside the Pool of Bethsaida, who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years, He said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.;" and in Luke we find Him saying, "Woe unto you Lawyers (or, as it has been more exactly translated, Conventionalists), for ye have taken away the key of knowledge (as it is translated, or Gnosis, as it is in the Greek), ye yourselves entered not in, and them that were entering in ye have hindered." The translators of this word "gnosis"

did not give any weight to a special meaning which it had at the time of Christ and for some centuries afterwards. This word meaning knowledge also had a separate weight as a term for "spiritual knowledge." It implied a knowledge of the deeper truths rather than the knowledge of external facts. Those who had gained it called themselves the Gnostics. We find a distinct school of thought of that name in the early days of Christianity.

As we turn to the New Testament and read the various Epistles with the idea of reincarnation in our minds, we find many new lights, and but little to challenge this conception. For instance, in the light of the idea of the children of God going from their Father's house to gain in this world the lessons which they might here gain, and, having here learned them, to return more useful to their Father's house, read that verse in the third chapter of Revelations where it is said, "Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out."

As we look into the history of the early Christian Church we find that there was always an inner tradition and an inner school. At one time they were only known under the name of Gnostics, and St. Paul refers to them as those who had the mysteries. What these mysteries were is not clearly set forth in the Bible, for they were "mysteries," and only those who had attained to a certain state of spiritual perfection were supposed to know them. The reason for this was the same as that which made the Master say, "Cast not your pearls before swine," in

recognition of the fact that there are great truths which will only be appreciated by a few and no benefits are gained by offering them to those who cannot perceive or respect them. If we look into the history of the early Church, two things must stand out: first, that the members sought above all the way of spiritual development; and second, that they were the guardians of considerable spiritual knowledge, which was not generally distributed. We can find traces in one school or another of the teaching of reincarnation. Coming down a little bit later in the history of the early Christian Church, we find that many of the most prominent Church Fathers were strong advocates of this teaching. Among others may be mentioned: Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Arnobius, and, above all, that great leader, Origen. He it was who, speaking of the previous existence of the soul, said: "And if the Catholic opinion hold good as to the soul, that it is not propagated with the body, but existed previously and for various reasons is clothed in flesh and blood, this statement (sent from God) no longer will appear extraordinary as applied to John."

Up to that time, so far as we can find, this was the most strongly held doctrine in the early Christian Church. At that time there was a strong exoteric formalist movement. Those who held it appear to have had for their objective the gaining of temporal power. They sought to make the Christian Church a strong body politically and in every way. Their attitude toward all the inner teachings was altogether hostile; in the first place because spirituality was appar-

ently not their prime concern; and secondly because any inner school tended to disrupt their strong outer organisation. Their doctrine was this: that the soul is born at the same time as the body, being generated by its father, the Devil; that the elect of the Lord are redeemed through Christ; and thirdly, that at the death of the body the spirit also goes into a state of coma or unconsciousness, and so remains until the day of judgment, when, at the sound of the trumpet of the Lord, all the souls shall come forth in their previous bodies and go before the judgment seat where God will sit and decide the fate of the people. Those who, being elect, have been redeemed will go in their physical bodies which they previously used, to Heaven, where they will exist eternally. Those who, not being elect, have not been redeemed, will go in their physical bodies to eternal torment.

These two doctrines were the two great ones of the early Church: one, the doctrine of reincarnation; the other, the doctrine of souls begotten in sin, elected of God, resurrected in the previous physical body. If any reader is particularly interested to read something of the early Christian Church and the methods which were used to gain the complete mastery which the formalists have obtained, he might do well to read the book *Hypatia*. There the methods which were adopted by the Church of that time and for many a day thereafter are more or less clearly set forth. The formalists gained the upper hand. They set their creed up as that which must be adopted and they superceded all other creeds, and made their conception that

which must endure, for everything else was heterodox to their orthodoxy.

As we look through the long dark period of Christian history from that date to the present, or say to the beginning of the nineteenth century, we shall find but very little variation in that teaching. The Catholic Church has carried it forward, with but minor changes, to the present time. When Protestantism came, did that change this teaching? Not at all. Martin Luther as strongly follows the old rigid doctrines of the old formalists as even the most zealous one could ask; and if you turn to the sermons of a hundred years ago of almost any denomination you will smell the brimstone and sulphur, and get just the same view-point as we have considered here. It is easy to find a good many books of old sermons, and they have all been closely tied in that old formalistic creed. And if you will walk in almost any cemetery, you can see engraved on the headstones texts that show the same faith, such as:

“Father, In Thy Gracious Keeping,
Here We Leave Thy Servant Sleeping.”

For the common belief was that the departed is not alive and with the Father, but is slumbering there in the ground, awaiting the sound of the last trumpet of the Resurrection.

But while such was the outer teaching of the Church, it would not be correct to say that this was the only teaching which was extant throughout the long dark period up to the beginning of the last century.

(To be Concluded)

Ernest S. Suffern.

EVOLUTION: SEEN AND UNSEEN

The principle of Evolution has become one of the fundamental ideas on which modern Science is building a vast and wonderful temple of knowledge. As scientists understand and use the word, evolution means the gradual development of the more complex forms of life out of the simpler ones; it means also a continual improvement in the adaptation of living organisms to the external world, in which they live. In short, evolution means a progression toward greater perfection of organisms.

Once upon a time it was thought by the theologians that God had created all kinds of animals perfect in the beginning, each in its own way; that all changes in their forms were accidents which tended to mar the perfection of the divine handiwork and plan. There were even "defenders of the faith" who tried to prove the existence of a Supreme Creator by the supposed perfection of His creatures.

Later on it was found by a multitude of facts of nature that the world is not perfect, but is often in very many cases very imperfect. And the brave men who discovered such facts and dared to announce them in the face of the bitter opposition of the theologians, these pioneers of science came to believe that the world of life was not created by a Supreme Power but that it developed, spontaneously, as it were, under the ceaseless play of the forces and energies of Nature. They could observe how the external world influenced, shaped and molded the growing, plastic forms,—sometimes making them more

perfect and sometimes less perfect. They could see the outer workings of Nature and found that what they saw could account for almost all the facts of organic life. And the result of this attitude of such scientists as Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, and Haeckel was that the principle of evolution was generally accepted, so that to-day there are very few educated men who refuse to recognise its validity and value. The facts of evolution are unassailable: it is only in their interpretation that there is room for difference of opinion.

The different species or kinds of animals show such wide differences that at first sight all men would probably declare that they could not possibly be physically related. Consider the vast difference between a tiny gnat and an elephant; between a worm and a fish; between a stalk of grass and a bird! But science has discovered such a wonderful continuity in the structure of organisms of the different kinds, and such wonderful and unexpected relationships in their growth and development from their very physical beginnings up to the time of birth, that it is now fairly generally believed by students of biology that all the different forms of life have had a common origin. In other words, it is now widely believed that all living organisms have physically descended from one single parent.

This idea is of such magnitude and immense importance that it is almost impossible to appreciate it fully. If true, it means that not only is the brotherhood of humanity an actual physical fact, but also that there is a real physical brotherhood of all forms of life. Not only does this

apply to the animal world, but to the vegetable world as well. There is no sharp dividing line between animals and plants: many very simple organisms partake of the characteristics of both kingdoms of nature,—the animal and the vegetable. Furthermore recent researches have shown that it is very difficult to find real points of difference between certain masses of mineral matter and the lowest forms of plant life.

It must be said that there is no proof of the common origin of species; but, on the other hand, there is a vast amount of very strong evidence in its favor. Nowhere, perhaps, has one species been actually observed to change over into another one. But these changes are supposed to take a very long time,—perhaps thousands and even millions of years. And many intermediate forms may usually be found between any two widely different species, so that a series of changes may be supposed to have transformed some members of one species into an entirely different species.

It is well worth while to know a little of the different kinds of evidence which point to the fact of a common origin of species. There are three distinct lines of evidence, coming from three distinct branches of science. And it is a fact that these three kinds of evidence support and agree one another. The three branches of science in question are:

1) Palaeontology; 2) Morphology; and 3) Embryology.

Palaeontology deals with the study of the fossil remains of organisms. It gives us information about many species of animals which are no

longer in existence at this time. When all the different kinds of animals, the living and the dead, are properly grouped, it is found that they form distinct branchings which unite in one common trunk. There is thus established, then, a genealogical tree for the almost innumerable kinds of animals.

An instance of the service of palaeontology may be given. Most of the mammals, or these animals which suckle their young, have five toes for each foot. The horse, however, has only one, the hoof. But there have been found fossil remains of pre-historic kinds of horses with two toes and with three toes, and there are evidences to believe that originally the ancestor of the present horse had five toes. Another instance is this: birds and reptiles seem to be quite distinct, but there have been discovered fossil remains in rock of a curious pre-historic bird, the *Archæopteryx*, a bird with feathers, having a tail like a lizard and real teeth of bone! This is thus the connecting link between birds and reptiles,—a “missing link” that has been found.

Morphology deals with the laws of the structure of organisms. It has been able to trace and to establish relationships between certain parts of the body of one animal species and the corresponding parts of the body of another species, perhaps widely different from the other, and thus showing how some parts of the body of one kind of animals developed quite different forms and uses in other species. Thus in the evolution of the physical body of Man it was the swimming bladder of the fish which developed into the lungs with which we breathe air to-day.

Perhaps the most important of the three is the evidence found in Embryology. All the higher organisms, as well as the lower, have their physical origin in a germ or egg, which is merely a single living cell. As this germ develops in the womb of the mother or in the shell of the egg, as the case may be, it passes through a series of typical forms or stages which are for a time quite similar to those of the growing embryos of many other species. The only difference is that one germ stops its development at a certain stage and becomes, say, a fish, while another germ continues to change and develops, let us say, into a human being. This wonderful fact seems to show very clearly that organic evolution is an orderly scheme built on plans that are universal, and it points strongly to the common physical origin of species.

Evolution, according to Science, therefore means that there is a striving in Nature to produce more perfect or more highly refined and differentiated organisms.

What is the unseen side of Evolution? It is the progress toward a higher state of perfection of the life or soul which dwells in the organism, or body, just as a man lives in his house. This soul is unseen by the physical eye, but its presence is evidenced by its activities in the body. Just as the organic form is evolving, so also the life in the form is growing and becoming more perfect in its nature. Were the activities of the soul less common, its existence might be more easily admitted. But the most common things tend to escape notice and study. The sun rises every morning, but how many men stop to reflect how

wonderful and beautiful this event really is!

The evolution of forms alone can have no meaning, for the forms constantly perish. They may perhaps transmit their acquired characters to their offspring in a long chain of generations, but the world in which we live will some day in the distant future become cold and dead,—and then organic evolution will have its ending. And what can be the meaning of all this? There is no reason, or plan, or any meaning, in such a process as that.

But when we accept the reality of life as something that can exist apart and distinct from matter, then we have at once a possible meaning. This life may be continuous, or immortal. In fact, it must be immortal in its aggregate, for it represents energy, and energy can not be destroyed, but only transformed into other kinds of energy. It may be quite possible that the highest form of life, that is to say, the human, is not only continuous, but maintains its own individuality as a permanent thing or being.

For reasons not necessary to state here, we hold that all life is immortal in its aggregate, for life is permanent, or individualised.

We may then view the evolution of life in this way: Life enters into close relations with forms, expresses itself through them, and is acted upon and affected by the outside world. It thereby develops new qualities and new phases of consciousness. The forms are limiting the life, as well as allowing it to express itself, so it is well that the forms or bodies should be destroyed, or rather that the life should withdraw from them, when they are no longer useful, vigorous

or healthy. But the life-energy enters again into bodies and leaves them, over and over again. Thus the evolution of the life goes hand in hand with the evolution of the form, and the two are very closely related. When the life has developed the qualities made possible in one species of organisms, it passes on to another species whose bodies are more highly organised and developed. And as one and the same life passes along in a series of forms with increasing development, so it may be quite likely that the various forms have actually been derived, or have descended, from some less evolved forms of another species.

The evolving life becomes individualised when the human species is reached, and thereafter it is the same soul which comes again and again into other human bodies. This allows the souls to become distinct in character from other men, thus giving rise to a diversity which gives great interest to human life. In the lower forms of life, the life-energy does not remain separate and distinct, after death, from that in other forms or bodies of the same species, but flows into a greater group-soul and loses the individuality which it had acquired in its life in the form just left. A school of small fish, such as minnows, will act as a unit. When frightened they turn about and swim away together in an orderly manner, like a well-drilled army. But when a group of men is frightened, they will fall over one another and run in different directions. The minnows have a common soul-life; human beings are distinct and separate individuals, or souls.

When scientists realise that the evolution which is unseen is by far the more important, and that

it even controls and guides the evolution which can be observed with the physical senses, then will come into being a Science which will be of a power and a scope that can at present be little realised. And that Science will deal with Life itself, as well as with its manifestations.

The evolution of life, or the evolution of the human ego through a long series of incarnations, was known to the ancient sages of all times, but it was not generally known to the masses of people. It was taught, so we have reason to believe, in the various Ancient Mysteries, such as those of Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt, the Mysteries of Mithra in Persia and Asia Minor, and the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries of Greece. We can see that it would be reasonable to expect that the general knowledge of the physical evolution, such as has now been fully established by science, must come before the widespread knowledge of the evolution of human egos.

We have to-day a clear knowledge of the evolution of physical organisms, and it is generally accepted among educated people. And so the time is ripe for a general diffusion throughout the Western Hemisphere, of the teachings of Reincarnation and Karma, for these are the laws under which the human soul evolves.

There is no doubt that the various facts and principles of evolution of physical organisms, or bodies, will be of the utmost value in the proper understanding of the higher evolution of the life itself. Therefore, it is most desirable that those students who wish to study the mysteries of life, should know the facts of the evolution of forms.

C. S.

WARFIELD IN A REINCARNATION PLAY

To the Editor:

I am an earnest believer in, and student of, karma and reincarnation, and have read your very interesting magazine for several years.

Two weeks ago I attended a theatrical performance: David Warfield in "Van Der Decken," written by David Belasco. It was a beautiful legendary play of the sea, written around the legend of the "Flying Dutchman," its chief theme being "Reincarnation," which Warfield very beautifully explained in the second act. Heading the program, the two following poems were printed, no author named:

I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh disguise.
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain,
The old soul takes the road again.

Such is my own belief and trust,
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust.

A Violet

God does not send us strange flowers every year.
When the spring winds blow in the pleasant places
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces,
The violet is here.

It all comes back—the odor, grace and hue
Its sweet relation of its life repeated,
No blank is left, no looking for is cheated,
It is the thing we know.

So after the death winter it must be;
God will not let strange light in heavenly places;
The old love will look out from the old faces.

Veilchen, I shall have thee.

Very sincerely yours,
Helen E. Koenig.

FIELD NOTES

From the New Zealand Section of the *Legion* there have just been received forty-nine applications for membership. The *Legion* workers of New Zealand are very active and propose to build up a movement which will do great service. A circular has been sent out stating that the object of the *Karma and Reincarnation Legion* is not to teach these two truths to such people as accept them already, "but to make the 'man in the street' familiar with two scientific facts that are absolutely necessary to him if he is to understand the philosophy of life and justice and his position in evolution."

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The Dutch Headquarters has sent in thirteen new applications for membership and an application for a Charter for a Group at Leiden. Mrs. van der Hell, the Dutch Representative, writes: "There is great interest in the *Legion* work. Many societies have asked us to give lectures about Karma and Reincarnation in their assemblies; we have already done so in many Temperance Societies and the Vegetarian League, also in the Society for Education of Children, and we have even delivered a lecture, and will soon give a second one, in the camps where the Belgian soldiers are accommodated. Many of these soldiers are very interested indeed in the problems of life; from them we get incessantly requests for information and for pamphlets. As soon as we possess a lantern, we will visit those camps again, and I am sure they will be delighted. All is going well!"

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Friends of the *Legion* in South Africa are offering to place subscriptions for REINCARNATION in those of the various public libraries and hospitals of their country that will accept the donation. Hospitals are to receive two copies: one for the men's ward, and one for the women's ward. This is excellent work, and the teachings of reincarnation and karma should bring comfort to a large number of the suffering. Various leaflets are to be placed in different issues of the hospital magazines.

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